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**U.S. ARMY RANGER FORCE UTILIZATION
A CONTINUING INABILITY TO CORRELATE
MISSIONS WITH CAPABILITIES**

**A Monograph
by
Major Steve A. Fondacaro
Infantry**



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**School of Advanced Military Studies
United States Army Command and General Staff College
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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<p>This monograph examines how well currently planned missions for Ranger forces correlate with their present capabilities. Ranger forces represent an extremely valuable strategic special operations asset that is not easily replaced. Lack of correlation between planned missions and unit capabilities has historically led to misuse of Ranger forces with disastrous results.</p> <p>The monograph first examines historical examples of Ranger force misuse, and focuses on the doctrinal reasons behind these events. The analysis reveals a continuous lack of consensus within the U.S. Army as to the purpose of Ranger forces. The reasoning, at War Department level, that determined unit organization was not the same reasoning that governed force employment at division and corps level in WWII. Senior Army field commanders in WWII and the Korean War saw Ranger units as elite infantry who could be counted upon to accomplish critical missions. (continued on other side of form)</p>					
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The Army formed Ranger units as American counterparts to the British commandos in WWII, and to create an interdiction force targeted against the enemy rear area during the Korean War. Ranger units in Vietnam were divisional long-range reconnaissance units similar to their previous counterparts only in name. The present-day battalions, formed in 1974, were created for role model purposes, with no specific operational mission in mind. The failed Iran Hostage Rescue Mission in 1980 marked the emergence of the current Ranger special operations mission under newly created special operations commands.

The examination continues with an analysis of current Ranger unit capabilities and present doctrine governing the use of these forces. Analysis shows a continuing confusions over exactly what missions Ranger units are designed to perform. This conflictling guidance in current manuals is due partly to U.S. unfamiliarity with the emerging area of special operations. This situations creates conditions for further misuse of Ranger units if efforts are not made to narrowly define Ranger mission areas that correlate with their present capabilities in unified command war plans. Additionally, it must be stressed that Ranger units are strategic assets designed to operate directly for the theater commander as part of a special operations joint task force. Control at lower levels risks misuse of a critical asset.

U.S. Army Ranger Force Utilization:
A Continuing Inability to Correlate Missions with Capabilities

by

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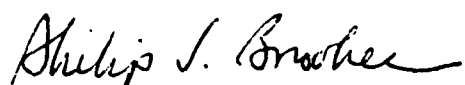
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ABSTRACT

U.S. ARMY RANGER FORCE UTILIZATION: A CONTINUING INABILITY TO CORRELATE MISSIONS WITH CAPABILITIES by Major Steve A. Fondacaro, USA, 66 pages.

This monograph examines how well currently planned missions for Ranger forces correlate with their present capabilities. Ranger forces represent an extremely valuable strategic special operations asset that is not easily replaced. Lack of correlation between planned missions and unit capabilities has historically led to misuse of Ranger forces with disastrous results.

The monograph first examines historical examples of Ranger force misuse, and focuses on the doctrinal reasons behind these events. The analysis reveals a continuous lack of consensus within the U.S. Army as to the purpose of Ranger forces. The reasoning, at War Department level, that determined unit organization was not the same reasoning that governed force employment at division or corps level. Senior Army field commanders in World War II and the Korean War saw Ranger units as elite infantry who could be counted upon to accomplish critical missions. The Army formed Ranger units as American counterparts to British commandos in World War II, and to create an interdiction force targeted against the enemy rear area during the Korean War. Ranger units in Vietnam were divisional long-range reconnaissance units similar to their previous counterparts only in name. The present-day battalions, formed in 1974, were created for role model purposes, with no specific operational mission in mind. The failed Iran Hostage Rescue mission in 1980 marked the emergence of the current Ranger special operations mission under newly created special operations commands.

The examination continues with an analysis of current Ranger unit capabilities and present doctrine governing the use of these forces. Analysis shows a continuing confusion over exactly what missions Ranger units are designed to perform. This conflicting guidance in current manuals is due partly to the lengthy history of confusion over use of Ranger forces, and partly due to U.S. unfamiliarity with the emerging area of special operations. This situation creates conditions for future misuse of Ranger units if efforts are not made to narrowly define Ranger missions that correlate with their present capabilities in unified command war plans. Additionally, it must be stressed that Ranger units are strategic assets designed to operate directly for the theater commander as part of a special operations joint task force. Control at lower levels risks misuse of a critical asset.

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I. Introduction

When field commanders perceive the Rangers to be supermen, capable of any task, they frequently waste Ranger units in the performance of¹ missions for which they are ill suited.

David W. Hogan, Jr.
1986

Throughout their history, U. S. Army Ranger units have represented to senior Army commanders (and to the Army in general), a carefully selected, specially trained combat force, which could be depended upon to successfully accomplish any assigned mission. During World War II, Ranger unit performance in the Philippines, North Africa, Italy, and France yielded, for the most part, resounding tactical successes that significantly raised their visibility, both in the armed forces and with the American public. The performance of Ranger units during the Korean War continued to make them a highly desired addition to American divisions and corps. This elite image was developed in the 40's and maintained throughout the 1950's and 60's and, most recently, in the 70's, following the reactivation of 1st and 2nd Ranger Battalions. Their commendable performance in Grenada during Operation URGENT FURY in 1983, enhanced the high esteem in which the senior Army leadership hold these forces.

While committed Ranger units have performed admirably, reaching a consensus on how to employ these forces has historically been a difficult and confusing task for senior Army leadership. This confusion has resulted from two problems: 1) lack of a clear operational concept for Ranger forces, which contributed to 2) a lack of appreciation for the level of command at which Ranger units should be controlled. The first problem prevents commanders from identifying the difference between Ranger and regular light infantry units, and the second problem creates the conditions for the misuse of a theater asset by a subordinate headquarters to support tactical operations.

The destruction of the 1st, 3rd, and 4th Ranger Battalions occurred at Cisterna, Italy in early 1944, while they were attached to 3rd Infantry Division, under U.S. VI Corps, in the Anzio beachhead. The loss of these battalions, leading the beachhead breakout, resulted in the virtual destruction, in a single battle, of the entire Ranger capability available to the Mediterranean theater of operations. After spearheading the Normandy landings in June, 1944, Ranger units were rarely employed on missions other than those handled routinely by standard infantry units. In Korea, the role of

the Airborne-Ranger companies was primarily to bolster the line troop strength of infantry divisions, conducting standard infantry missions as parts of infantry battalions and regiments. The creation of Special Forces units in the early 1950's, only added to existing confusion as to exactly what constituted Ranger operations. In Vietnam, divisional reconnaissance units were designated "Ranger" companies solely for morale reasons and to bolster recruitment. This same rationale was reflected most recently in the 1973 decision to activate the currently existing 1st and 2nd Ranger Battalions. Activated primarily as an Army role model, the Rangers' mission at activation remained as poorly defined as at any other time in their history.

The historic confusion and misunderstanding persists today as the Department of Defense (DOD) grapples with the task of establishing exactly what constitute special operations and how DOD will task organize to meet future Special Operations Force (SOF) requirements. Over the past fifteen years, since the activation of modern Ranger units, official doctrine has disagreed over the training and employment of Ranger forces, forcing unified commanders, as well as Ranger unit commanders to develop Ranger missions and training programs based upon employment considerations that are not based upon doctrinal consensus.

This situation lends itself to widely divergent interpretation by individual commanders at all levels, from company on up, of what constitutes valid Ranger missions. This situation leaves leaders open to the danger of failing to correlate Ranger unit capabilities with mission requirements. The failure to properly correlate these two factors lies at the heart of past incidents of Ranger unit misuse, and make repetition of similar incidents highly probable.

This historic lack of correlation between Ranger capabilities and missions, as well as the probability of its recurrence today, is the subject of this paper. Analysis of this issue will begin with a brief review of past history to identify common problems in the misuse of Ranger forces and determine if similar conditions exist today. This review will be followed by a careful examination of current Ranger unit capabilities and missions to determine whether or not true correlation exists. Ranger unit organization, equipment, mobility and sustainability will be discussed to assist in making this determination.

No attempt to deal with the larger unresolved issues within the special operations area (e.g. other SOF units' missions, command and control structure, relation to

civilian special activity programs, lack of joint doctrine, etc.) will be made except where they directly impact upon Ranger units.

II. Ranger History

A complex theme, part of which was beyond Darby's control and part of which was encouraged by him, runs through the history of his Rangers. Originally intended to conduct amphibious landings and commando-style operations, the Rangers were nonetheless used as conventional infantry when the necessity or convenience² of higher headquarters so dictated.

Dr. Michael J. King
1985

Throughout American military history, the term "Ranger" has been more readily identifiable with a popular image of military stamina, toughness and courage, rather than with a specific and narrowly defined military capability. This condition has led to disastrous examples of Ranger misuse since 1942. Adoption of the name throughout history by numerous units which performed a variety of missions across a broad spectrum of tactical and operational environments has contributed to this lack of specificity. Rangers have existed in some form since before the Revolutionary War. At different periods they have performed primarily as reconnaissance elements along colonial borders (Robert Rogers' Rangers during the French and Indian War), guerrillas in an offensive role against Indians or regular troops (Francis Marion's troops and Daniel Morgan's Rangers during the Revolutionary

War), scouts for larger, regular formations (Texas Ranger units under General Zachary Taylor during the Mexican War), and highly mobile, mounted raiding parties (John S. Mosby's Confederate Raiders under Jeb Stuart during the Civil War). The Spanish-American War and World War I did not produce any American elite units performing specialized missions. The short amount of time during which the United States was involved did not result in the development of an institutional need for such units.³

Modern Ranger units came into being during World War II on 19 June, 1942 with the activation of the 1st Ranger Battalion in Great Britain. This was the result of a recommendation submitted the same year by Colonel Lucien K. Truscott, Jr. to General George C. Marshall at the conclusion of a fact-finding mission to Great Britain.⁴ The mission was directed by General Marshall to tour the training facilities of the British Commando units and determine whether the formation of similar American Commando units was feasible. The disastrous outcome of British operations against the Germans in Europe in 1939-40, had forced the British military to initiate a campaign of economy of force operations along the European coast. These operations were planned in retaliation for the steady stream of German air attacks upon the British Isles, to bolster public morale, and

to disrupt perceived German preparations for an expected cross-channel invasion. Commando units, specially trained and equipped for raids and sabotage, appeared to be the most cost effective way of achieving these objectives. General Marshall concurred with the British approach and saw these operations as means of gaining valuable combat experience for American troops prior to a major invasion of Europe as well as a means of showing American support for the new Alliance.⁵

Additionally, these units' exploits were to show an Allied public that successful action was being taken against the Axis until a major effort could be made. The original concept for use of the Rangers was to train and operate jointly with the British Commando units to execute the planned interdiction campaign. The primary purpose of Ranger units, however, was to rotate selected men into and out of the unit, thereby providing a pool of combat experienced veterans for the regular Army manpower base.⁶ The number of raids projected for Commando-Ranger units justified this approach on a small scale. Additionally, the visceral opposition to elite units of any kind, among the regular Army leadership, made this approach much more supportable in terms of obtaining recruitment cooperation.

Following the receipt of official authorization to activate the American unit, the name "Ranger" was selected by Colonel Truscott from a list of suggestions after being directed by Major General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the chief of the War Plans Division of the War Department, to "select an American name for the new unit."⁷ Thus, the unit was named without regard for operational similarity with its historical predecessors.

By September, 1942, despite the ambitious aims of the commando campaign plan of the Combined Operations Headquarters (COHQ), only one American Ranger-British Commando raid had actually taken place, at Dieppe, France in August. The operation was compromised early on and ended a tactical failure with COHQ forces suffering 3,400 casualties out of 5,000 troops committed.⁸ Five other operations were mounted but were cancelled. Nine others were cancelled during planning, and ten others were terminated at initial planning stages when 1st Ranger Battalion was detached from British Commando control to participate in the North Africa invasion. Prior to Operation TORCH, a total of 43 Rangers had obtained combat experience as originally envisioned by General Marshall.

With the onset of a major Allied invasion, the original reason for Ranger units, i.e. combined commando operations with the British, had disappeared.⁹ However, at the same time a new mission emerged, namely, the spearheading of major amphibious landings. The Rangers were detached from COHQ control in September, 1942 and attached to U.S. II Corps for the North Africa invasion. Their mission was to take out key points along the coast to cover the corps' landing. While attached to 1st Infantry Division, the 1st Ranger Battalion performed commendably during TORCH, seizing the port of Arzew. Later during the landing, Major General Terry de la Mesa Allen, the 1st Division commander, would, on two separate occasions, use the Ranger Battalion to augment his line regiments with one Ranger company.¹⁰ The attachment of Ranger Battalions to divisions would directly contribute to the "misuse" of Ranger units later in the war.¹¹ The fact that the original reason for their creation (i.e. provide an experienced manpower base) had disappeared, in addition to their toughness and availability, created the conditions for individual interpretation by field commanders how to best employ these units. In the absence of any other stated missions or employment doctrine, it is not surprising that

senior field commanders applied an available force to a perceived need. Some did better than others in the application.¹²

Recurring Ranger unit success while attached to corps and divisions led to their continued use by these headquarters. Ranger commanders, having no real doctrine to guide them, accepted these missions, albeit reluctantly. James J. Altieri summarizes a leader's complaint about misuse in his book, The Spearheaders, "We took a port with few casualties, we're tough and well trained. They [the regular units] run up against some stiff opposition--okay, send the Rangers in, let 'em disorganize the resistance, then let the other troops follow through."¹³ The Rangers had established a reputation as "super" infantrymen or shock troops early during the North African campaign, and would be utilized as such throughout the war. Though Rangers would, occasionally, be assigned raids, sabotage and other specialized missions, senior commanders always viewed them as an asset they could apply when conditions in the line got serious.¹⁴

The exemplary Ranger performance in North Africa led to the battalion remaining intact instead of returning its men to their original units, providing trained combat leaders, as originally envisioned by General Marshall. Additionally, it provided the impetus within the Army to activate more Ranger battalions.¹⁵ Throughout the war, six Ranger battalions would be activated. 1st through 5th Ranger Battalions would be employed in the European Theater, and 6th Ranger Battalion would operate exclusively in the Pacific. The primary justification for the formation of additional Ranger battalions after TORCH was the ongoing planning for additional major amphibious landings, but senior field commanders "...liked the Rangers as fighters, shock troops, who could be trusted to get a job done."¹⁶

Ironically, the disaster that befell 1st, 3rd and 4th Ranger Battalions at Cisterna, Italy in early 1944, was during the conduct of one of the more appropriate Ranger missions the units received in World War II. However, the level at which they were controlled, contributed to the virtual annihilation of the total Ranger capability then available to the Mediterranean theater of operations. The slow consolidation of the Anzio beachhead by VI Corps failed to

exploit the initial Allied success. This and a poor intelligence collection effort enabled large German reinforcements, rushed south from as far away as Germany, to move into the area undetected. Leading the beachhead breakout in January, 1944, 1st and 3rd Battalions, attached to 3rd U.S. Division, were to infiltrate enemy lines to seize a critical road junction in the village of Cisterna. 4th Ranger Battalion and the rest of 3rd Division would then attack to penetrate the German front and link up at Cisterna. The ambush in which 1st and 3rd Battalion were caught ended in surrender by the remnants of both units (6 Rangers later escaped and returned to U.S. lines), and the loss of over half of 4th Battalion.¹⁷ This action eventually resulted in the deactivation of all three battalions.

However, 2nd and 5th Ranger Battalions had already been activated, and by this time had received their missions for the Normandy landing in June. The assault at Point du Hoc by 2nd and 5th Ranger Battalions, a legendary example of a Ranger operation, was ideally suited to the Rangers' capabilities. It was a special mission, requiring specially trained and organized troops. The operation was planned and controlled by First Army, and its results had an operational effect on the outcome of the landing. Unfortunately, following

this operation, 2nd and 5th Battalions, attached to divisions and smaller units, would serve as standard infantry through most of the war.

6th Ranger Battalion had also been activated, under Sixth Army in the Pacific. The 6th Battalion remained under Sixth Army control throughout the war, and managed to consistently perform specialized missions suited to its organization and training. General Douglas MacArthur, probably reacting to the deactivation of the highly successful Marine Raider battalions, directed Lieutenant General Walter Krueger, Sixth Army Commander to form a provisional Ranger battalion by redesignating the 98th Field Artillery Battalion in December, 1943.¹⁸ Initially using the Marine Raider organization and equipment as a guide, the battalion was manned by volunteers from throughout Sixth Army. Later, the battalion was reorganized under tables developed for 2nd and 5th Ranger Battalions. Exclusively under the control of Sixth Army, 6th Battalion was highly successful in seizing critical targets during the Philippines campaign, and executing the famous rescue of American prisoners from the Japanese POW camp at Cabanatuan. Conducted by 128 Rangers, in coordination with friendly guerrillas and Alamo

scouts, the operation freed 511 prisoners and resulted in over 500 Japanese casualties at a cost of two Rangers killed and two wounded. The rescue included evacuating the prisoners 24 miles through the enemy rear to friendly lines.¹⁹ The success of this battalion was attributable to its control exclusively at Army level or higher, and the understanding by the senior Army leadership of the unique missions for which it was designed.²⁰

The end of World War II marked the end of any perceived need for Ranger units. The three battalions still active at war's end, 2nd, 5th and 6th, were all deactivated by the end of 1945. Throughout the period between the end of World War II and the Korean War, a confused discussion took place within the Army over the need for an elite force for special missions and the definition of what exactly constituted special missions. The lack of a dedicated effort to gather and study lessons learned for the purpose of developing future doctrine hampered the ability of the Army to evaluate the types of forces it would need in the future. A study on the feasibility of an airborne reconnaissance unit or "Ranger Group" by Army Field Forces in 1947 would be argued within the Army until the outbreak of the Korean War without the

fielding of a unit. The Army had not come to an understanding of a Ranger operational concept by validating a need first, then attempting to apply it to an existing unit with corresponding capabilities, or fielding a new unit with those capabilities built-in.²¹

During the Korean War, the highly successful infiltration and rear area interdiction capability of North Korean guerrilla units, early in the war, caused the formation of organic Ranger units by General MacArthur's Far East Command (FECOM). With a view towards using enemy tactics against them, FECOM formed the 8213th Army Unit on August 25, 1950. Later known as the Eighth Army Ranger Company, it was organized on the 1945 Ranger organization tables, trained in Japan, and attached for duty with the 25th Division under IX Corps in October.²² Additionally, an Allied Special Operations Group was formed by FECOM as part of the United Nations Command in August, 1950. It consisted of over 200 American volunteers along with an additional 200 British Royal Navy and Commando personnel. The unit was augmented by U.S. Navy fast transports and submarines. In September, 1950, it would conduct feints at Kunsan to draw enemy attention away from the Inchon landing, and then make an

abortive attempt to seize Kimpo airfield in support of the landing.²³

General J. Lawton Collins, then Army Chief of Staff, returned from Korea in late August, 1950, deeply impressed by the North Korean infiltration capability and FECOM's attempt to develop a similar capability. He issued a directive calling for the formation of divisional "marauder" companies designed to infiltrate enemy lines and strike critical targets, i.e. bridges, command posts, tank parks etc.²⁴ Additionally, the directive called for the establishment of a training center at Fort Benning, Georgia. This center would eventually become the U.S. Army Ranger School. The primary result of this directive was the eventual fielding of fifteen Airborne-Ranger companies, thirteen of which were to be assigned to infantry divisions and to see duty in Korea.

The Ranger companies in Korea would last less than one year as division commanders threw them into their dangerously thin lines to augment infantry battalions as standard infantry, shock troops and patrolling units. The attrition suffered by these units quickly made them combat ineffective. By September, 1951, the Army decided to deactivate the companies in favor of producing Ranger

qualified, individual replacements for units through the Ranger School at Fort Benning.²⁵

The discussion within the Army as to what Ranger missions were, and how Ranger units should be utilized continued to be marked by confusion with the missions of the old Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and the emerging role of the newly-created Special Forces units. The only change brought about during the Korean War period, to the perpetually sketchy Army Ranger concept, was the addition of airborne qualification. The insignificance of Ranger airborne operations in Korea aside, Ranger units would remain airborne qualified from this point on.

In Vietnam, Ranger units appeared again in the Army, when the divisional long-range reconnaissance patrol units were redesignated as lettered Airborne-Ranger companies in November, 1968. The operational meaning of the term "Ranger" became ever more obscure as the 75th Infantry Regiment was selected as the Ranger regimental base. The World War II Ranger battalion lineage had been allocated in the 1950's to the Special Forces units. The 75th Infantry drew its lineage from Merrill's Marauders (5307th Composite Group-Provisional) from the World War II China-Burma-India theater. The Ranger

designation was awarded to these units solely for the purpose of improving morale and creating an incentive for volunteers.²⁶ These companies would continue to perform as divisional long-range reconnaissance units throughout the war. By 1972, the last Ranger companies left in the active force were deactivated. Ranger companies still exist today in the National Guard (Michigan, Texas, and Puerto Rico), retaining their divisional reconnaissance function.

The formation of the present day Ranger battalions in 1974 marked the beginning of a slowly developing effort to clarify Ranger missions, and to place Ranger units within the force structure properly. In 1974, the Army Chief of Staff, General Abrams, in correspondence directly to Lieutenant Colonel K. C. Leuer, the first commander of 1st Ranger Battalion, stated that Ranger battalions would be formed to fulfill two requirements: 1) to act as a role model for the rest of the Army in the post-Vietnam era, and 2) to act as a breeding ground for quality leaders to populate the Army manpower base. Only after the unit was formed, did the search for an operational mission begin.²⁷

Initial missions emphasized the battalion's role as an elite infantry strike force available to unified commanders. Later, following the Mayaguez incident in 1975, a role, in direct support of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was developed. The search for a doctrinal base was slow, but it had been initiated. The U.S. Army Infantry School, as the doctrinal proponent agency for Ranger units, included Ranger units in its new field manuals beginning in 1978 with FM 7-20, The Infantry Battalion (Infantry, Airborne, Air Assault, Ranger) and followed this with field manuals for the company and platoon in 1980 and 1982, respectively. Inclusion in these field manuals underscored the perception of Ranger units as basic infantry, but a detailed explanation of how they fit into the infantry structure was confusing:

The ranger battalion is specially trained and organized to conduct decentralized limited independent combat operations anywhere in the world. It may be called upon to:

- Establish a credible American presence to demonstrate U.S. resolve.

- Conduct raids, special (non-hostile) operations, and long range tactical reconnaissance.

- Infiltrate and exfiltrate by air, sea, or land, using parachute assault (including HALO), small boats, and Navy vessels (including SCUBA); or on foot, moving overland.²⁸

As is seen in the above excerpt, FM 7-20 was unable to shed sufficient light on Ranger employment doctrine. This manual referred the reader to FM 7-85, Ranger Operations which was not to be fielded for nine years. The update to FM 7-20 in 1984 has deleted all reference to Ranger units.

The Ranger special operations role came about from a requirement to find a unit to supplement DELTA force during the planning for the Iran hostage rescue in 1979. Major General James B. Vaught, commander of the joint task force, tasked the Rangers to provide a company to augment DELTA in November, 1979.²⁹ Following the failed rescue attempt in April, 1980, the special operations mission requirement was expanded to include 1st and 2nd Ranger Battalions. By 1983, 1st Special Operations Command (SOCOM) was activated as the umbrella headquarters for all Army special operations forces. Operation URGENT FURY into Grenada in October, 1983 involved both Ranger battalions, as part of a special operations joint task force, to force an entry and establish an airhead to receive larger follow-on forces. This operation was a success, and resulted in the formation of a Ranger Regimental Headquarters and an additional battalion in 1984. This is the Ranger force structure that exists today. (See Annex A)

The history of Ranger units has done little if anything to aid today's planners in developing a clear doctrinal concept for Ranger unit employment. Until doctrine is written, Ranger units will continue to be utilized by individual commanders as highly trained and reliable infantry, as has been the case in the past. While history has shown that more often than not, missions will be successfully accomplished, the cost will be the misuse and waste of a strategic special operations asset.

III. Ranger Force Capabilities

This is vital. There is a hell of a mess to our front. Fechet counter-attacks with all he's got, direction north from about 7277 at 1400. Can you send me one reinforced company with a hairy-chested company commander with big nuts as Fechet's last reserve?....

Message from CG, 1st
Infantry Div to LTC
W.O. Darby, Cdr, 1st
Ranger Battalion.
North Africa, 22 Feb 43³⁰

A preliminary condition to a discussion of Ranger missions is an understanding of Ranger unit organization and equipment. This section will briefly discuss these two areas. Specific data is available in the Ranger battalion Modified Table of Organization and Equipment, MTOE #07085HFC01 FC 1085³¹ and the 75th Ranger Regiment Statement of Operational Capabilities³² dated 17 August, 1988.

The 75th Ranger Regiment is a major subordinate headquarters of 1st Special Operations Command (SOCOM), the Army major command for all Army special operations forces. Located at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, 1st SOCOM is the Army component command of United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) located at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa,

Florida. USSOCOM is the U.S. unified command for all Department of Defense special operations forces.³³

The Ranger Regiment is currently authorized 1,857 personnel, organized in three line battalions, and the Regimental headquarters and headquarters company (HHC). The regimental HHC is authorized 132 personnel and is collocated with the 3rd Battalion at Fort Benning, Georgia. 1st Battalion is located at Hunter Army Airfield in Savannah, Georgia, and 2nd Battalion is at Fort Lewis, Washington. The coordination problems posed by the wide geographic separation of the regiment requires a routinely high degree of decentralized planning and execution by the battalions. The three line battalions are identical and are authorized 575 personnel making up a battalion HHC, and three rifle companies. A detailed breakdown is available at Annex A.

Equipment distribution unique to the Ranger organization includes three M60 machine guns per rifle platoon weapons squad, three 90mm recoilless rifles, in addition to three DRAGON systems in the weapons platoon, and an assortment of FM, HF, and SATCOM radio systems down to platoon level, all compatible with digital burst equipment. This equipment gives

the Ranger elements at company level and below, substantially more firepower, communications, and antitank capability than other light infantry.

Each battalion is authorized a full complement of equipment to conduct military free-fall parachute and scout swimmer/SCUBA operations. Each battalion is authorized 165 military free-fall qualified personnel and 37 SCUBA qualified personnel (25 personnel are dual-qualified).³⁴ A separate equipment issue system for the conduct of special operations enables the Regiment to receive augmentation of a wide range of weapons, radios and other equipment.

Manning of Ranger units is weighted toward combat troops, with relatively few support troops. A separate Ranger Support Element (RSE) provided by the installation provides all classes of supply and services to an alerted battalion. Occasionally the RSE will deploy with the battalion to its Remote Marshalling Base (REMAB) or Initial Staging Base (ISB) to provide continuous support. Once inserted into an objective area, a Ranger battalion can operate up to 48 hours without resupply or extraction. Specially equipped subordinate elements can operate for longer periods.

While this organization provides a high degree of operational flexibility, it poses problems for the mobility of Ranger units. The Regiment has no organic transportation capability, except for a limited number of tactical vehicles in certain scenarios. As part of a joint task force it is 100% dependent upon Air Force assets to deploy its elements.³⁵ The current "75th Ranger Regimental Readiness Standing Operating Procedures (RSOP)" calls for a Air Force package of ten C-141B and twenty-two C-130 sorties to deploy a standard Ranger battalion.³⁶ This does not include the RSE. The Regiment, including the Regimental Headquarters element, would require thirty-one C-141B and sixty-seven C-130 sorties to deploy.

Deploying Ranger units are lightly equipped and lightly armed to enhance their flexibility and speed on the objective, i.e. tactical flexibility and speed. At the operational level, it is the joint task force that produces speed and flexibility. As the direct action element of Army special operations forces, Rangers habitually operate as part of a joint task force that combines Ranger offensive capabilities with the necessary delivery and extraction assets. The formation of a special operations unified command underscores the principle that special operations are inherently joint operations. Joint special operations task

forces must always consist of assets that have established habitual training and operational relationships in order to achieve the degree of proficiency and reliability special operations require.³⁷ As a part of this task force, Ranger forces are capable of performing any of their Mission Essential Tasks (METL) (Annex B) in addition to a variety of tasks involving special skills.³⁸ These capabilities are produced through a rigorous annual training program.³⁹

Ranger unit training conducted at battalion or above underscores the importance of the special operations joint task force relationship. All Ranger unit participation in unified command-sponsored exercises is initiated with strategic deployment and insertion of the joint task force. This usually involves Air Force and Army special operations aviation units operating with the Ranger unit throughout the exercise under a single joint task force commander. The task force is controlled by the in-theater special operations command (SOC) of the host unified command. In this way, unified commanders exercise command and control over Ranger forces and familiarize the joint task force with the theater missions it will be expected to accomplish.⁴⁰

Below battalion, Ranger training focuses on tactical live fire exercises at company, platoon and squad.

These exercises are based upon tasks drawn from standard light infantry field manuals. The primary difference between regular infantry unit training and Ranger unit training is the special environment in which each task is conducted. This training is usually conducted as part of a bi-lateral training event with one or more other special operations units within USSOCOM.⁴¹

In summation, Ranger organization is designed for habitual operation as part of a joint special operations task force in support of theater commands. During the conduct of joint exercises, planners must focus on the joint task force as a whole, and not on any single element, as each element is dependent upon the other to accomplish the collective mission. Ranger training enhances this external relationship and is internally focused upon delivering highly trained, offensive light infantry forces on the objective within a special operations scenario. As seen, Ranger capabilities are a product of organization, logistics, and training. With this understanding of Ranger capabilities, a discussion of appropriate missions that correlate with these capabilities can now be undertaken.

IV. Ranger Force Missions

Ranger units are assigned strike and tactical reconnaissance missions and special light infantry missions,⁴² in support of special operations.

TRADOC Pamphlet 525-34
1984

In this section, current Army operational concepts for Ranger forces will be discussed and examination made of the characteristics that identify Ranger missions. At the same time, the discussion will attempt to reach an understanding of which of these missions simultaneously apply to probable special operations scenarios, and correlate with Ranger force capabilities.

The above quote from TRADOC Pamphlet 525-34, U.S. Army Operational Concept for Special Operations Forces, reflects the Army's current operational concept for Ranger unit employment. It emphasizes Ranger missions in three separate areas: strike operations, tactical reconnaissance, and special infantry operations. The pamphlet goes on to describe four separate categories of operations: Ranger, strike, tactical reconnaissance, and special infantry. Ranger operations are further described as "...taking two forms: quick response and deliberate operations."⁴³ The

former are characterized by rapid deployment and time sensitivity, the latter by detailed planning and preparation. Any and all missions fall into either of these categories. What remains unclear is what characteristics differentiate Ranger missions from missions undertaken by any other infantry unit or SOF, i.e those aspects which make these missions uniquely suited to Ranger forces.

Strike operations, though not defined, are described:

Strike operations are performed against targets that have strategic or significantly high value, political significance, or are of a time-sensitive nature. They can be conducted throughout the depth of the battlefield, in support of conventional operations, or deep within an unfriendly area or region, in support of special operations or national objectives.⁴⁴

This description uses unclear language and raises certain questions as to Ranger unit employment. "Throughout the depth of the battlefield..." indicates main battle and rear area operations, which are nowhere addressed. The adjectives: "strategic, significantly high value, politically sensitive and time sensitive" are not mutually exclusive conditions as they apply to strike operations, e.g. politically sensitive targets are probably strategic and of significantly high

value. Language aside, a clear picture of what constitute strike operations for Ranger units is lacking.

Field Manual 7-85, Ranger Unit Operations and Training produced by the Infantry School in June, 1987, represents the most comprehensive effort made to date to delineate how Ranger units train and fight. In it, strike operations are broken down into three categories: raids, interdiction operations and personnel/equipment recovery operations. The manual then goes on to describe each category in detail using illustrations and detailed explanation. Each category is integrated into an AirLand Battle doctrinal scenario in which the category is expected to occur on the battlefield.⁴⁵

Returning to TRADOC Pamphlet 525-34, the tactical reconnaissance mission is described as:

Specific reconnaissance missions performed by rangers to satisfy either theater or corps requirements, including reconnaissance of area or point targets prior to a strike by either conventional or special operations forces. Rangers also conduct⁴⁶ deep target acquisition and designation.

The new Long Range Reconnaissance Detachments and Companies assigned to Divisions and Corps fulfill this function.⁴⁷

FM 7-85 states that Ranger units are organized to conduct reconnaissance to meet the needs of the "... Ranger Force

commander."⁴⁸ Strategic reconnaissance, i.e. beyond 150 kilometers, is currently a Special Forces responsibility. Tactical reconnaissance, beyond the requirements of the Ranger unit commander, is no longer applicable to Ranger forces.

The final mission category named under the operational concept in TRADOC Pamphlet 525-34, is special light infantry operations. Nowhere are these missions defined, but examples are provided. However, nothing differentiates these missions from those performed by any regular infantry force. FM 7-85 also divides Ranger operations into three groups: strike operations, other Ranger operations and special operations. Strike operations are explained in depth and are identical to the operational concept in TRADOC Pamphlet 525-34 except that their conduct is linked to an objective AirLand Battle doctrine, i.e. "...destroying, delaying or disorganizing the enemy, or causing him to divert a significant portion of his combat power to rear area security..."⁴⁹ Strike operations are further broken down into raids, interdiction and personnel/equipment recovery operations. The second group are "other Ranger operations." These correspond to the Ranger METL (Annex B) and are missions that are integral to any infantry force. The final group is special operations. The field

manual definition corresponds almost exactly to the definition in JCS Publication 1, Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms.⁵⁰ However, it goes further to specifically delineate those characteristics that make operations "special". Specifically, special operations are conducted to safeguard U.S. citizens or property abroad, rescue detainees, recover sensitive items, conduct show of force, or assist other SOF. Additionally, the decision to conduct special operations is based upon high-level, national, political, and diplomatic considerations. Finally, they are the result of a strategic directive to a unified command by the National Command Authority (NCA).⁵¹

The missions for Ranger units as outlined by TRADOC Pamphlet 525-34 and FM 7-85 appear to be out of synchronization. The U.S. Army operational concept and the basic field manual should at least agree on the missions to be performed by a particular force. The operational concept in TRADOC Pamphlet 525-34 reflects the historical effect of the Vietnam-era Ranger units whose mission was long-range reconnaissance. Additionally, the concept does not clearly define what special operations are. "Special light infantry operations" as a term only adds to existing confusion between Ranger and regular infantry missions. The 1984 publication date of TRADOC

Pamphlet 525-34 indicates a review and subsequent rewrite of the concept is in order in order, for the purpose of correlating current Ranger force capabilities with anticipated missions.

V. Conclusions

Commanding the Rangers was like driving a team of very high-spirited horses. No effort was needed to get them to go forward. ⁵²The problem was to hold them in check.

COL William O. Darby
April, 1945

This study has examined the hypothesis that lack of correlation between Ranger force missions and capabilities has been the primary cause of Ranger force misuse since World War II, and found it valid. The major cause of this condition has been the lack of a clearly defined operational concept. Additional factors deriving from this ill-defined concept include: historical confusion surrounding the term "Ranger," command and control of Ranger forces at too low a level, i.e. division and corps, and the outstanding performance by Ranger units that make them highly prized by senior field commanders.

In the future, without achieving a better understanding of how and when to use these forces, the prospect for avoiding the repetition of past Ranger misuses is not good. As a result of this study, some recommendations can be made

to clear some of this confusion by focusing attention on the single major problem area, namely, development of a clear operational concept, consistent with AirLand Battle Doctrine. Within the context of an operational concept, all questions concerning level of control, and appropriate missions should be answered.

TRADOC Pamphlet 525-34, U.S. Army Operational Concept for Special Operations Forces was written in July, 1984 to meet this requirement. However, it fails to correlate missions with current Ranger force capabilities properly. Therefore, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-34 should be rewritten to reflect the missions and employment considerations described in Field Manual 7-85, Ranger Unit Operations and Training. Special operations is a complex concept:

"it supports two umbrella concepts--AirLand Battle and Low Intensity Conflict--and involves five types of units, the full spectrum of conflict and all three levels of war. The general paragraph⁵³ should explain all this to the reader."

The concept should delete interdiction of major lines of communication and tactical reconnaissance as Ranger missions.

Interdiction denotes an indefinitely sustained effort, a capability Ranger forces do not possess. Ranger units are not organized or trained to conduct tactical reconnaissance above that required for the unit commander. The "75th Ranger Regiment Statement of Operational Capabilities" is explicit on this point.⁵⁴ This mission confuses present Ranger units with the Vietnam-era Ranger units whose mission was exclusively long-range reconnaissance.

The concept's description of strike operations indicate use of Ranger forces within the main battle area and rear area, but fails to provide any examples of how this might occur.⁵⁵ It also indicates different conditions requiring the use of Special Forces and Ranger units to perform strike missions, but provides no indication of what the conditions are. Ranger forces are the special operations direct action arm of USSOCOM. There should be no strike mission that they are not capable of conducting.

"Special light infantry missions" are neither defined nor differentiated from regular infantry missions. These operations, as described in TRADOC Pam 525-34, can

be conducted by any infantry unit. These missions are not special in themselves. It is the conditions under which the missions are performed that make them Ranger-peculiar. These conditional factors might be 1) national or theater-level sensitivity of the mission, 2) target location in the operational or strategic depth, 3) time available, and 4) the neutralization or destruction standard required.⁵⁶ These factors provide a field commander with firm criteria as he matches regular infantry or Ranger units to target requirements.

The Ranger battalion organization is a light infantry unit, though not quite as light as the new Light Infantry Division battalions. It possesses extra firepower, and is totally reliant on external mobility assets. It is differentiated from its infantry counterparts, however, by its specially selected and trained personnel, and its habitual employment as part of a special operations joint task force. The special skills Ranger personnel possess enable the unit to perform standard infantry missions at the tactical level to higher standards of performance, i.e. time and quality. The habitual training relationship the Ranger Regiment has with other SOF members of a joint special operations task force enable this joint unit to project a highly reliable and lethal, direct action capability throughout the operational or strategic depth of the battlefield. The

missions performed on the objective at platoon, company and battalion level are light infantry missions. But they are conducted under unique conditions in terms of location, sensitivity, and quality of performance. In addition, special tasks are conducted in conjunction with insertion, actions on the objective, and extraction, utilizing national assets that are beyond the scope of regular infantry unit training. The current operational concept does not make these points clear, and leaves the reader with the impression that Ranger units can be applied by themselves. Emphasis on the joint task force as the basic special operations unit should be made throughout the text of future concepts.

Ranger units are virtually irreplaceable light infantry, which should be utilized exclusively by the theater commander under special conditions. They are strategic and operational assets, that are habitually employed as part of a SOF joint task force against targets throughout the operational or strategic depth of the battlefield, though application in the main battle area and rear area is rare. Lower level commanders' (corps and below) focus is too limited and too narrow to properly apply Ranger units to targets that correlate with their capabilities. Used as regular infantry, Rangers cannot be readily replaced, nor will they be available to perform critical special operations as targets present themselves.

A rewrite of TRADOC Pamphlet 525-34 should be undertaken immediately, and should emphasize most of the points made in this section. Its development should be coordinated with other service components and published jointly. As an initial staff product of USSOCOM this task is ideal, and would go far toward creating consensus about a new and very unfamiliar operational area. Until then, the danger is high that special operations forces in general, and Ranger forces in particular, will be employed based on considerations that fail to correlate missions with unit capabilities.

ANNEX A - Ranger Organizational Charts

75th Ranger Regiment

75th Ranger Regiment HHC

75th Ranger Regiment Staff

75th Ranger Regiment Headquarters Company

75th Ranger Regiment Reconnaissance Detachment

75th Ranger Regiment Fire Support Element

75th Ranger Regiment Ranger Indoctrination
Program Detachment

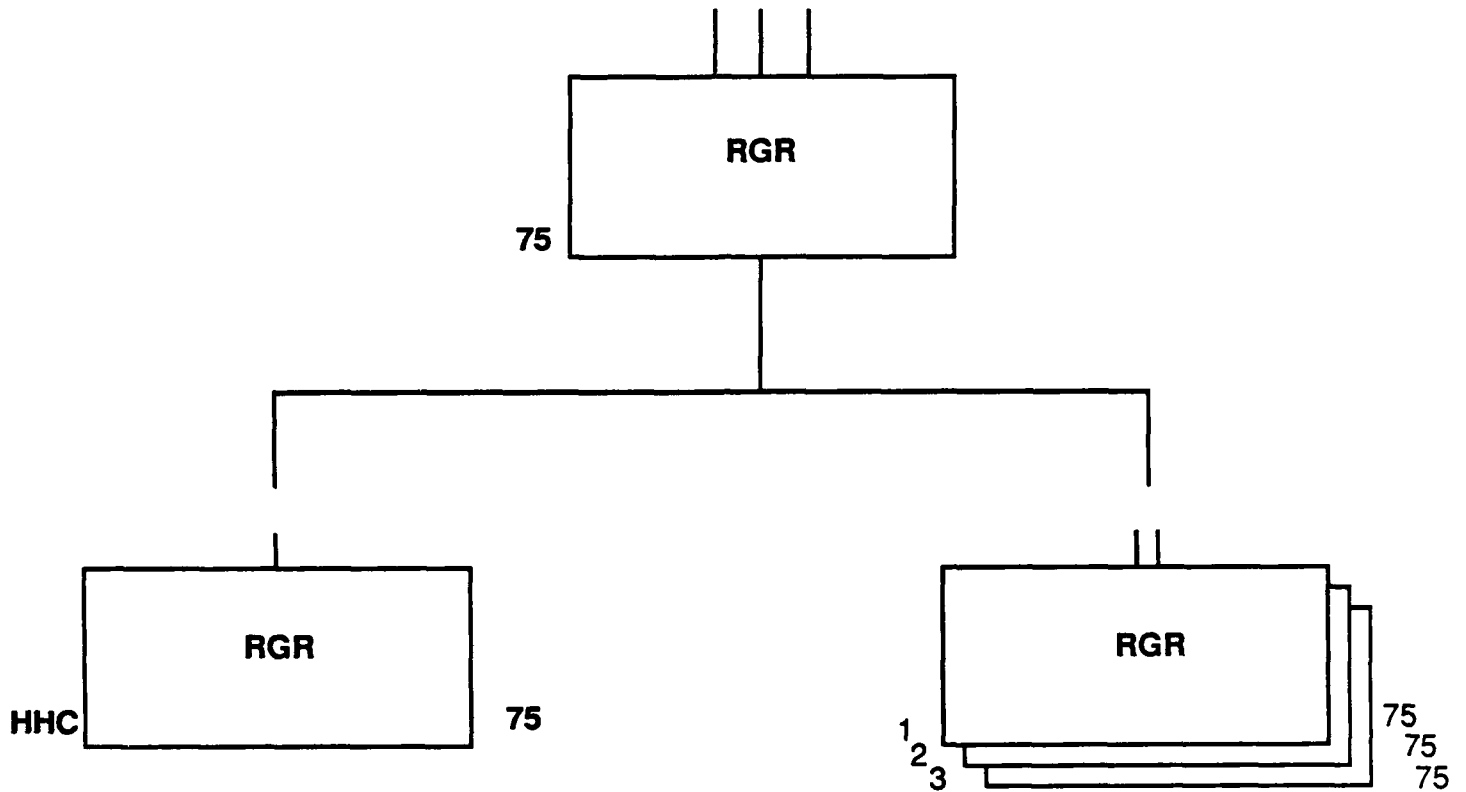
75th Ranger Regiment Signal Detachment

75th Ranger Regiment, Ranger Battalion

75th Ranger Regiment, Ranger Battalion HHC

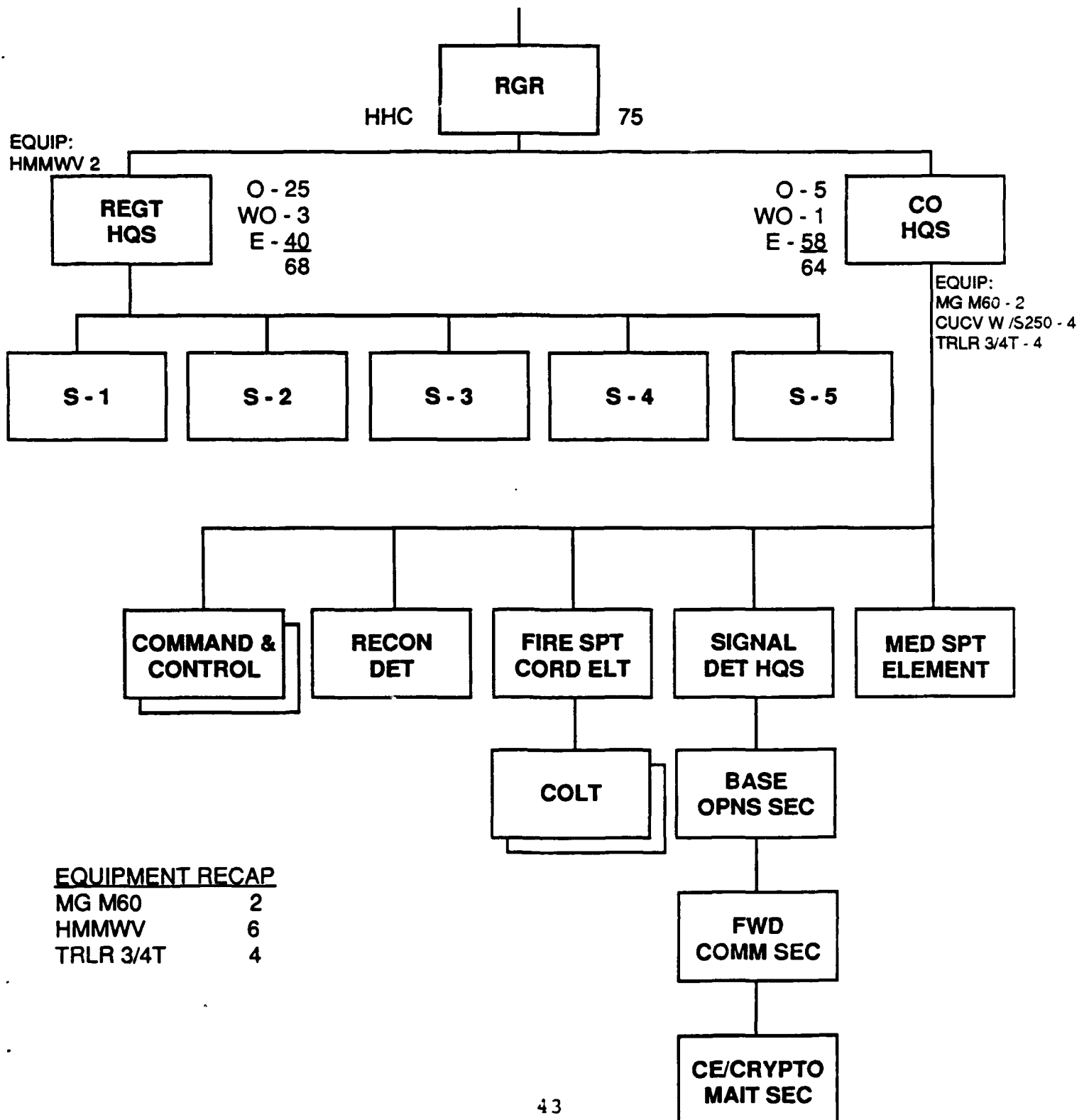
75th Ranger Regiment, Ranger Company

75TH RANGER REGIMENT



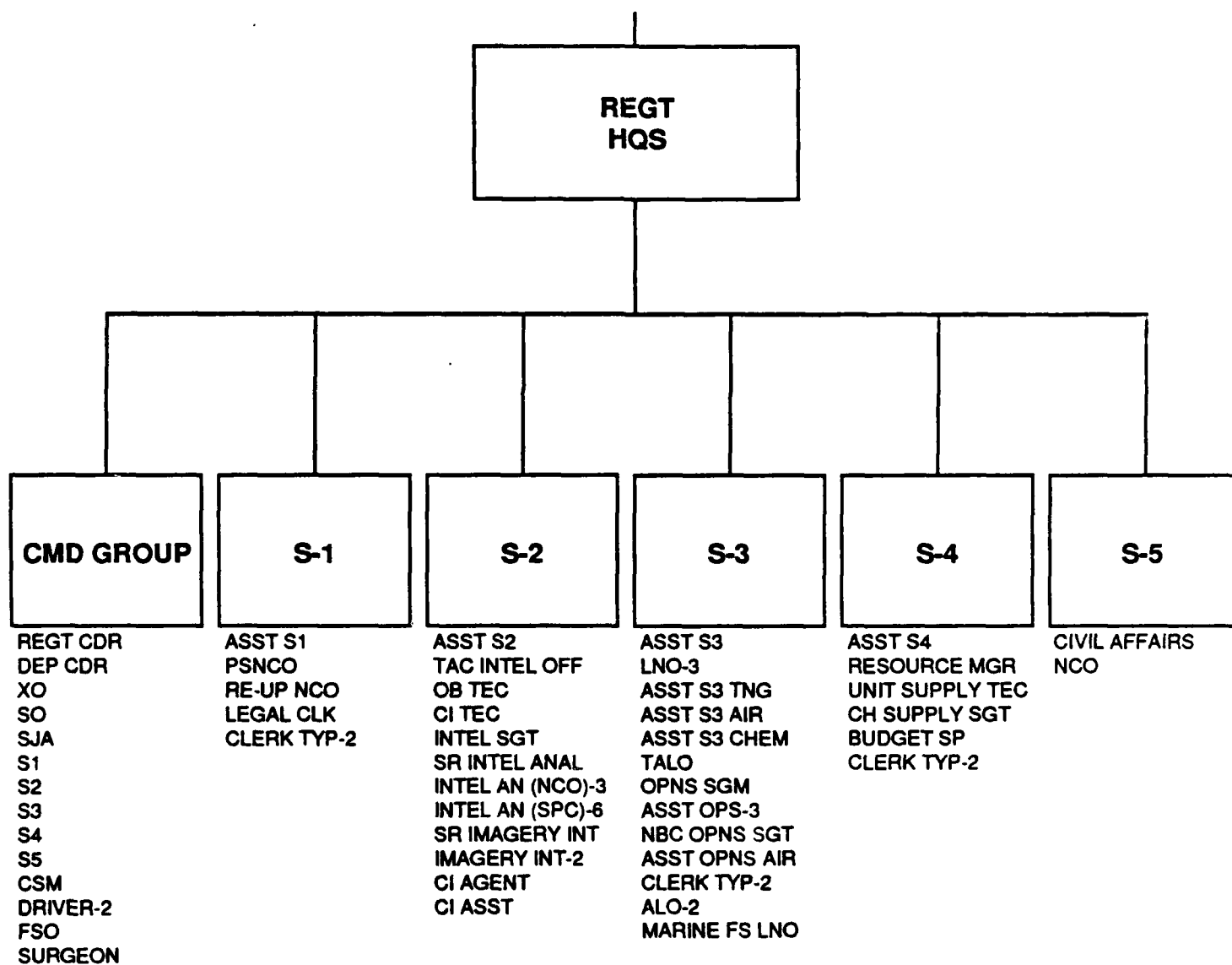
75TH RANGER REGIMENT

HEADQUARTERS & HEADQUARTERS COMPANY



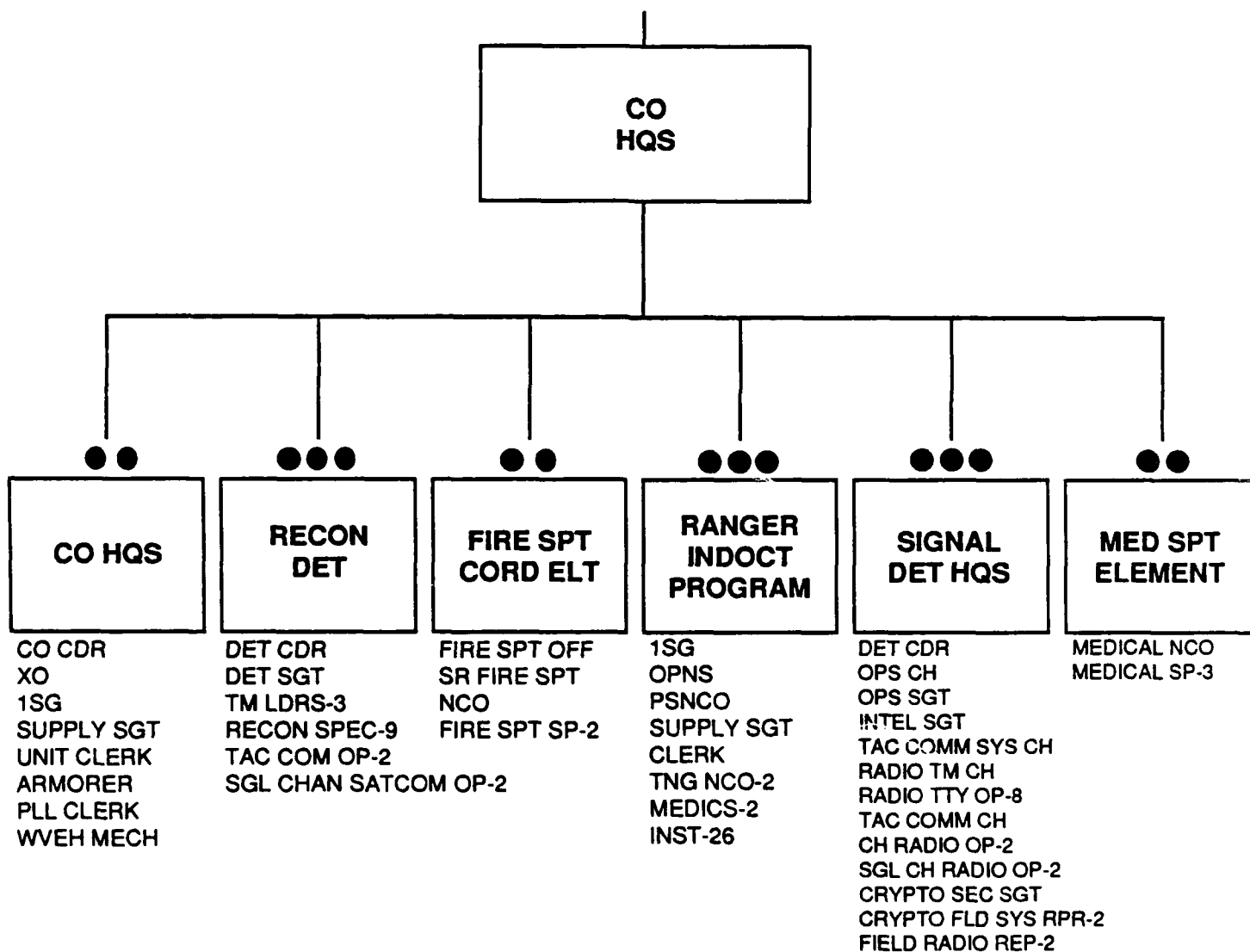
75TH RANGER REGIMENT

STAFF



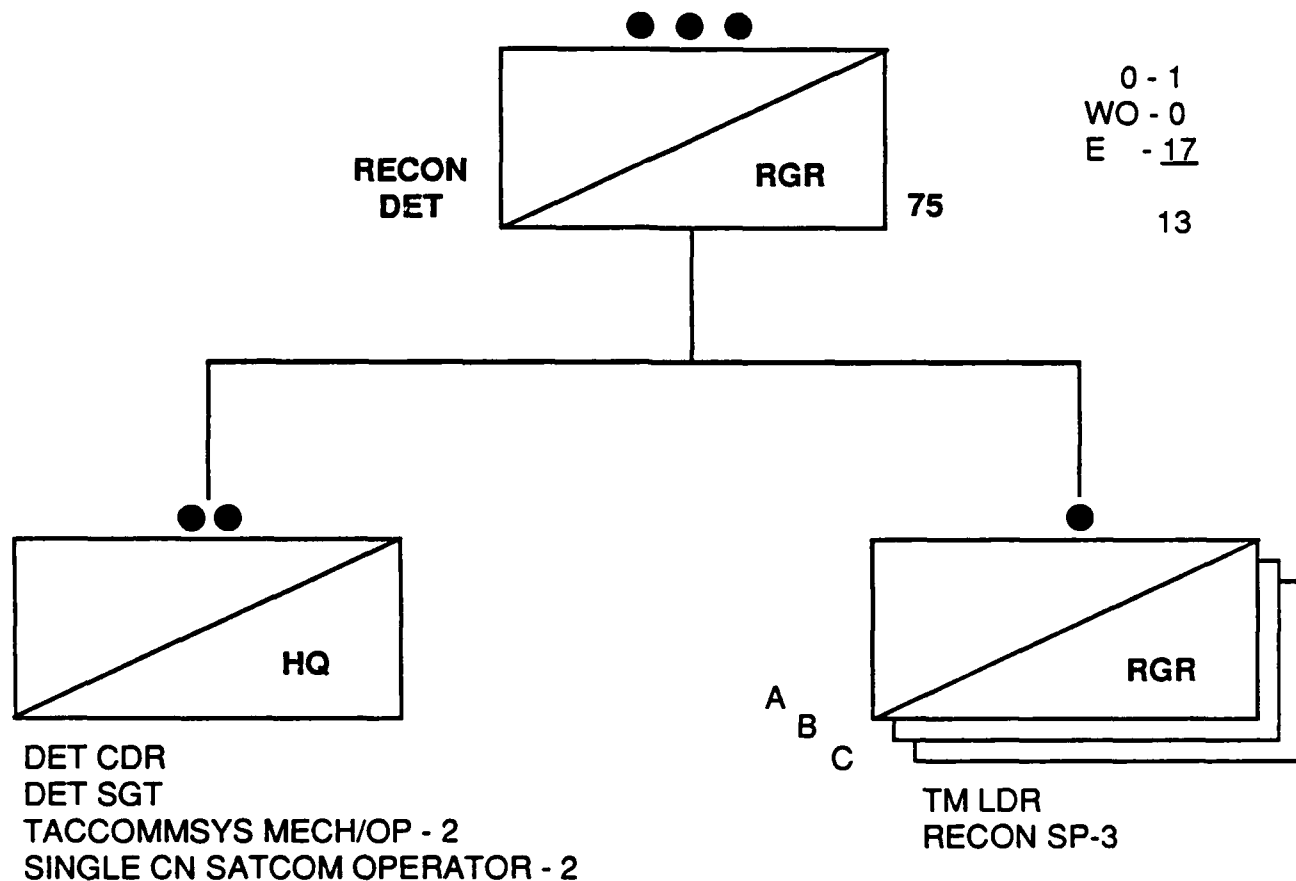
75TH RANGER REGIMENT

HEADQUARTERS COMPANY



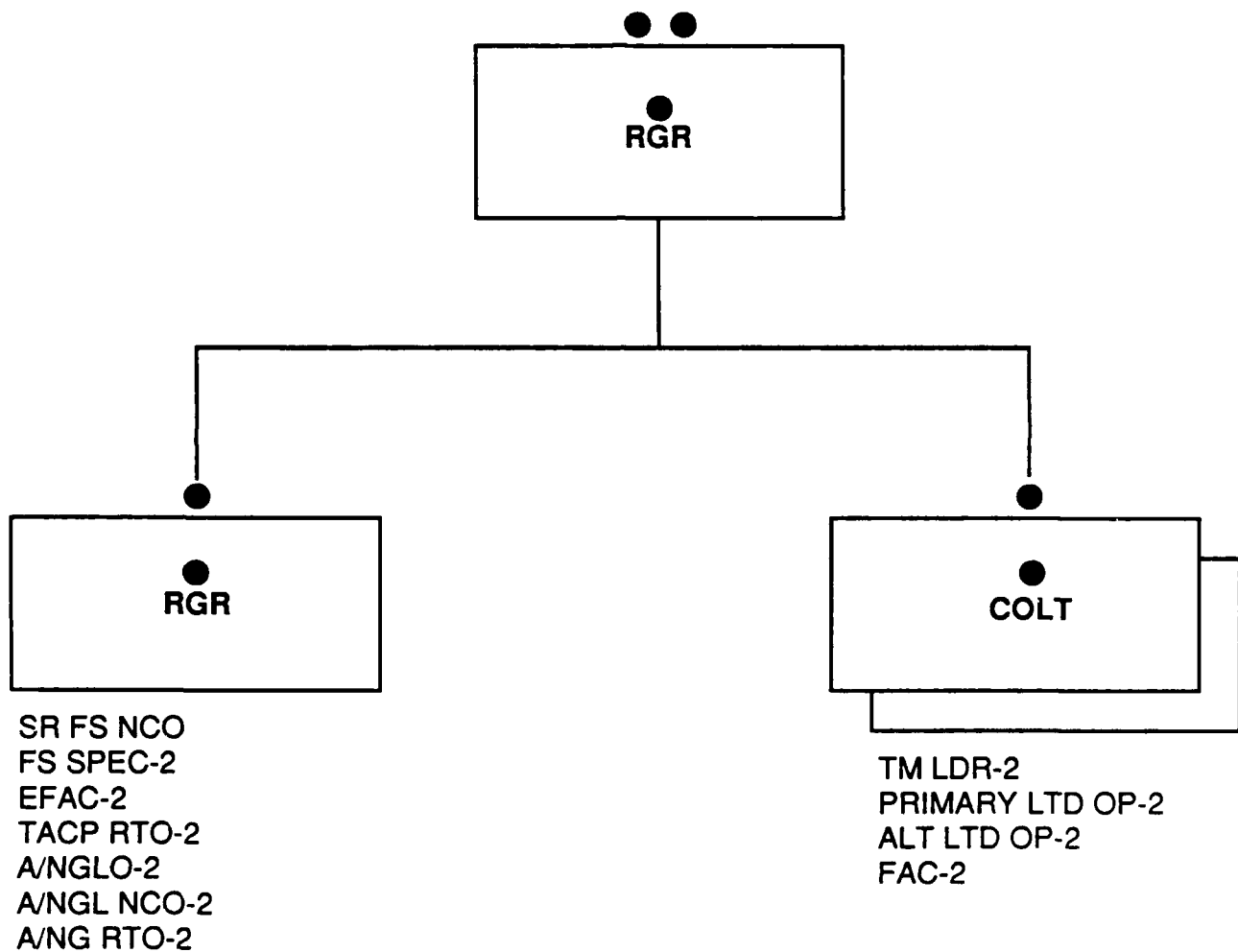
75TH RANGER REGIMENT

RECONNAISSANCE DETACHMENT



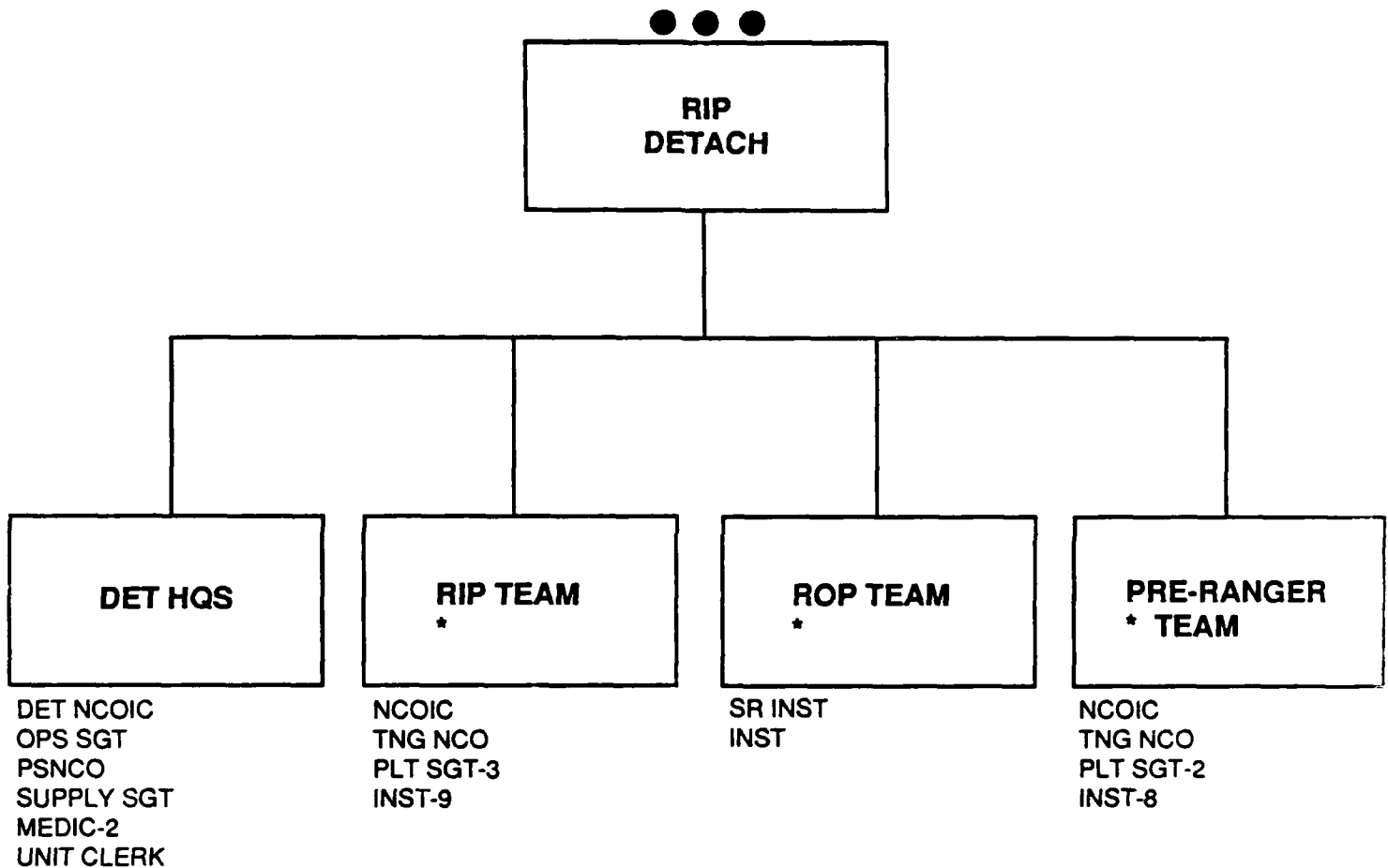
75TH RANGER REGIMENT

FIRE SUPPORT ELEMENT



75TH RANGER REGIMENT

RANGER INDOCTRINATION PROGRAM DETACHMENT



***NOTE**

DEFINITIONS:

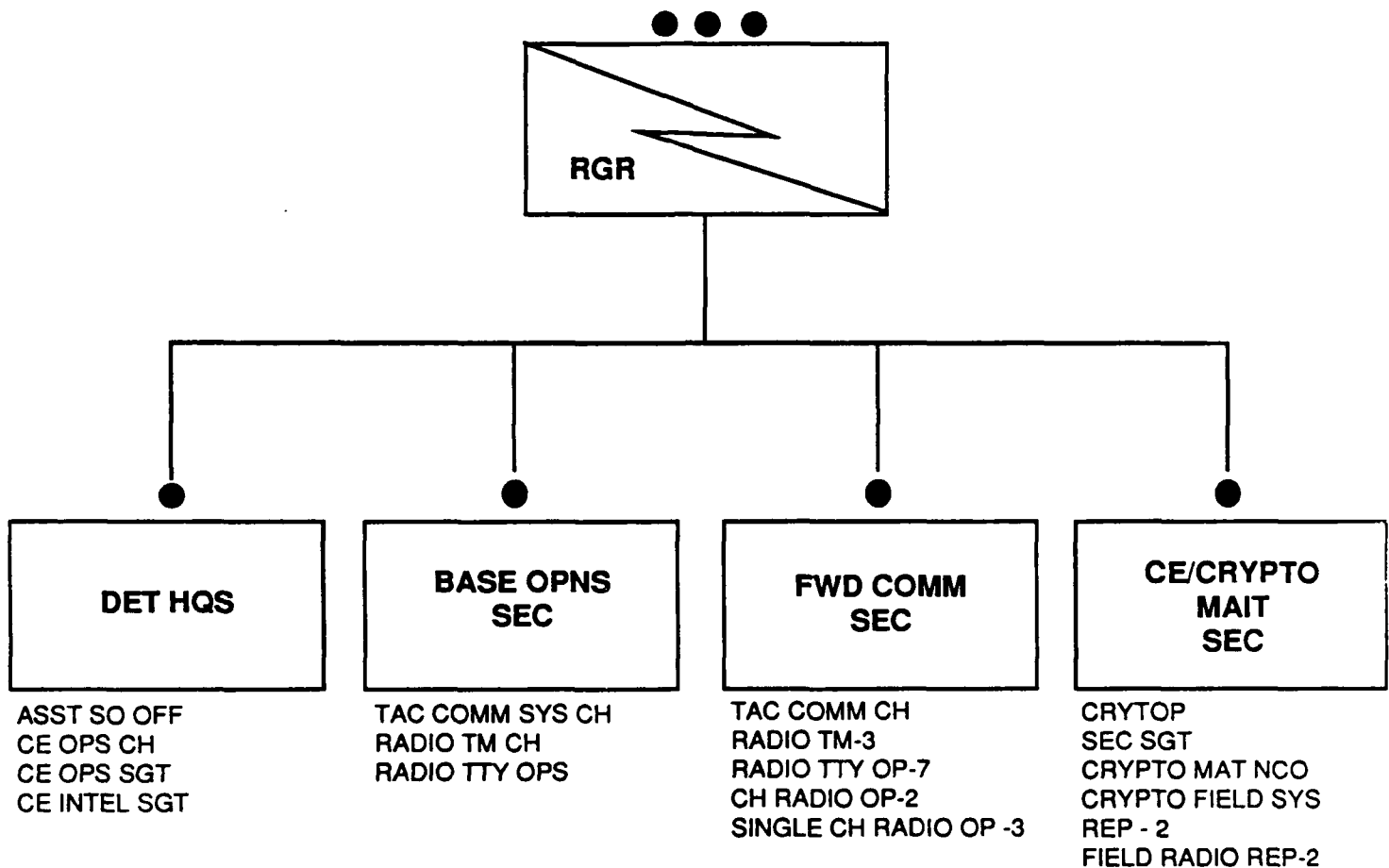
RIP - RANGER INDOCTRINATION PROGRAM - TRAINS ALL ENLISTED VOLUNTEERS

ROP - RANGER ORIENTATION PROGRAM - TRAINS ALL OFFICERS AND RANGER QUALIFIED NCO'S E-6 AND ABOVE

PRE-RANGER - THREE WEEK COURSE THAT PREPARES RANGER BN SELECTEES FOR (TRADOC) RANGER TRAINING COURSE.

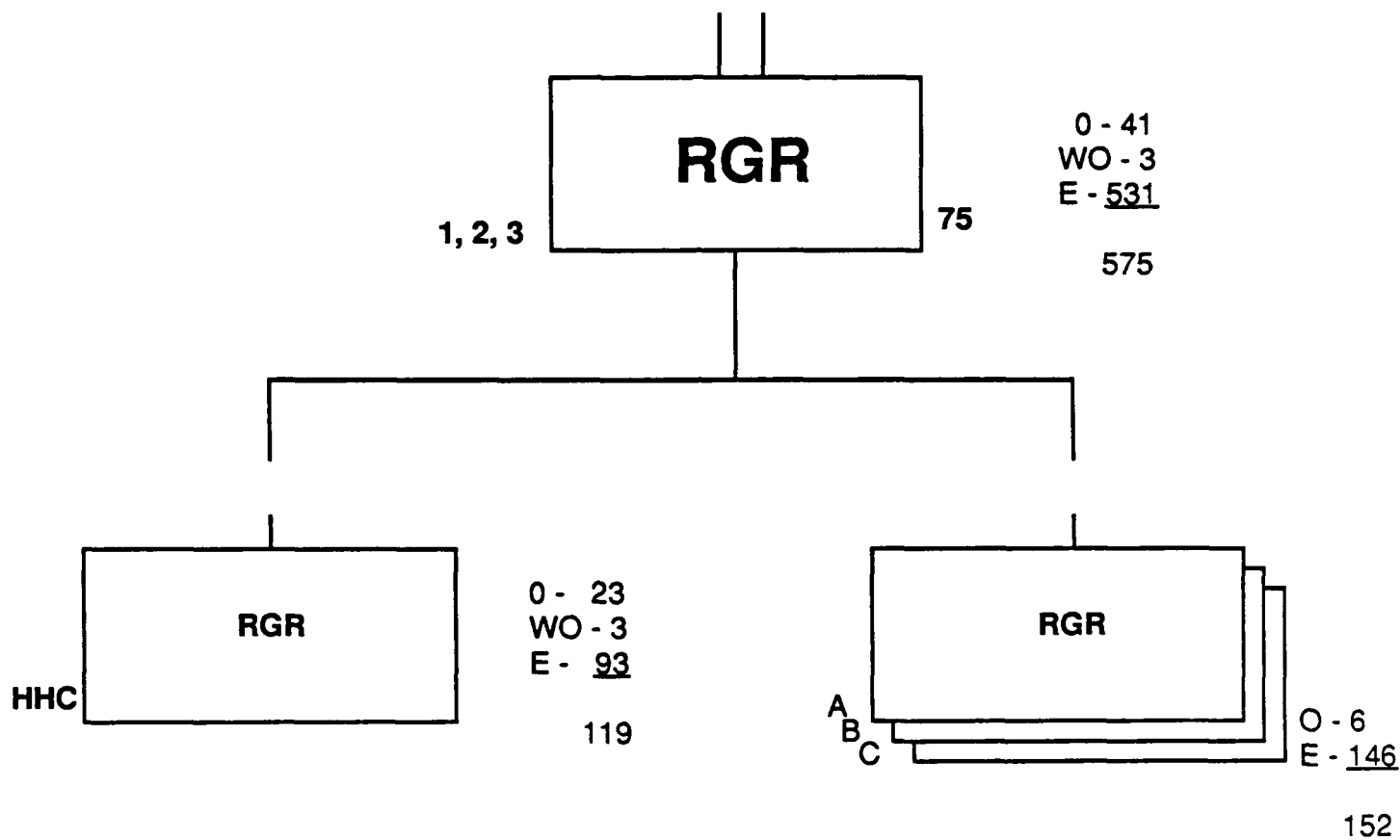
75TH RANGER REGIMENT

SIGNAL DETACHMENT



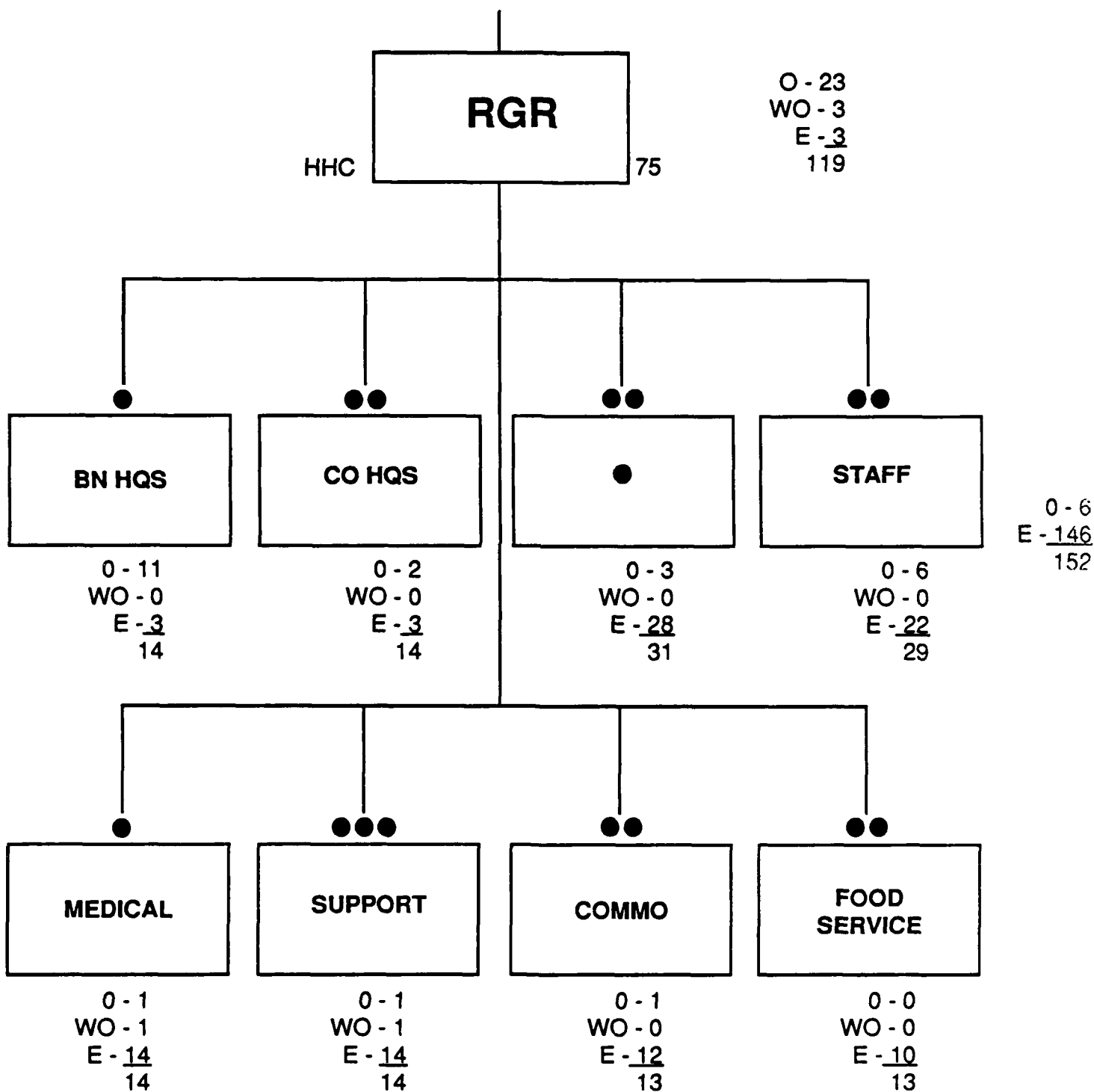
75TH RANGER REGIMENT

RANGER BATTALION



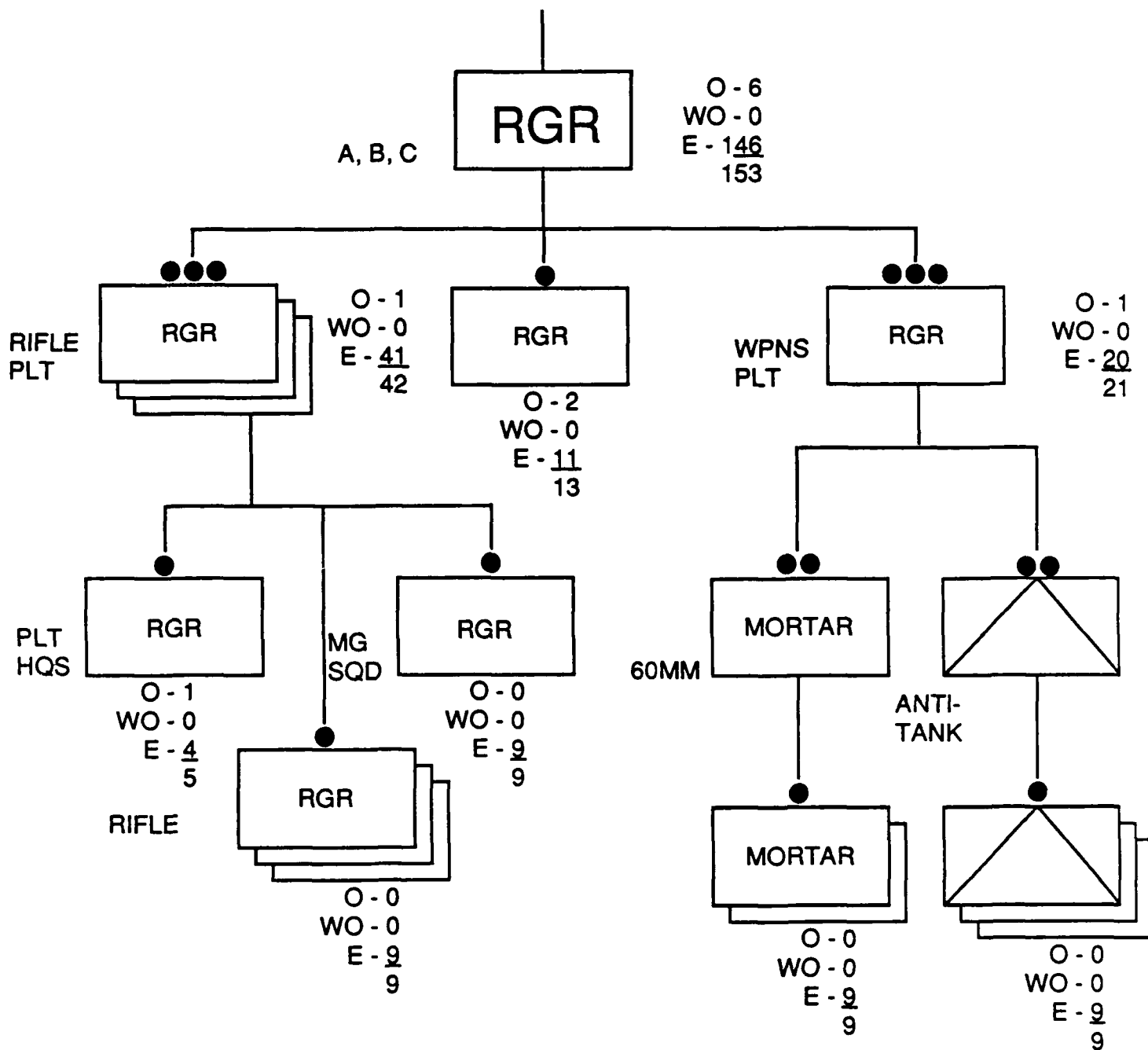
75TH RANGER REGIMENT

RANGER BATTALION HEADQUARTERS & HEADQUARTERS COMPANY



75TH RANGER REGIMENT

RANGER BATTALION RIFLE COMPANY



ANNEX B - FM 7-85 Ranger Mission Essential Task List (METL)

<u>Missions</u>	<u>Bn</u>	<u>Co</u>	<u>Plt</u>	<u>Sqd/Sect</u>
Raid	X	X	X	
Movement (Incl infil/exfil)		X	X	X
Hasty Attack		X	X	
Perimeter Defense	X	X		
Airborne Assault	X	X		
Air Assault	X	X		
Ambush		X	X	X
Antiarmor Ambush			X	X
Zone Recon			X	X
Area Recon			X	X
Escape and Evasion	X	X	X	X
Passage of Lines	X	X	X	X
Linkup	X	X	X	
Infil/Exfil, Boat	X	X	X	X
Forced March, Live Fire				X
Scout Vehicle Crew, Live Fire				X
60-mm Mortar Crew, Live Fire				X
90-mm RR Fire Support				X
DRAGON Fire Support				X

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¹David W. Hogan, Jr., "The Evolution of the Concept of the U.S. Army's Rangers, 1942-1983" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1986), 546.

²Michael J. King, Rangers: Selected Combat Operations in World War II, Leavenworth Paper #11. (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute, 1985), pp. 5-11; Hogan, p. 2.

³Roger A. Beaumont, Military Elites (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1974), p.24.

⁴King, pp. 5-11.

⁵William O. Darby and William A. Baumer, We Led the Way (San Rafael: Presidio Press, 1980) pp. 24-25; King, pp. 5-11.

⁶Lucien K. Truscott, Jr., Command Missions: A Personal Story (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1954), pp. 22-23; King, pp. 5-6.

⁷Truscott, p. 40; King, pp.6-7.

⁸Darby, pp. 41-50.

⁹Truscott, pp. 55-56.

¹⁰Hogan, p. 78.

¹¹Though the term "misuse" is easy to apply in hindsight, the lack of any consistent use or stated purpose for Ranger forces probably made this application appear valid at the time.

¹²King, p. 74.

¹³James J. Altieri, The Spearheaders, (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1960), p. 137.

¹⁴Hogan, pp 81, 88.

¹⁵Ibid., 87-88.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Darby, pp. 154-168; King, pp. 29-41.

¹⁸Hogan, p. 181.

¹⁹King, pp. 55-71; Hogan, pp. 214-217.

²⁰Hogan, p.195

²¹Ibid., pp. 210-218.

²²Ibid., p. 220.

²³John Prados, Presidents' Secret Wars: CIA and Pentagon Covert Operations Since World War II (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1986), pp. 62-65; Steve A. Fondacaro, "A Strategic Analysis of U.S. Special Operations during the Korean Conflict, 1950-1953." (Master's thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1988) p. 90; Hogan, pp. 221-222.

²⁴Hogan, pp. 223-227.

²⁵Ibid., p. 250.

²⁶Ibid., p. 462.

²⁷Colonel Keith M. Nightingale in a letter to the author, 4 November, 1988. Colonel Nightingale was the one of the original company commanders assigned to the 1st Ranger Battalion in 1974. He also functioned as the battalion plans officer and was tasked with developing the initial missions and capabilities for the unit.

²⁸Department of the Army. FM 7-20, The Infantry Battalion (Infantry, Airborne, Air Assault, Ranger), April, 1978, p. 1-2.

²⁹Nightingale

³⁰Department of the Army. FC 7-85, Ranger Unit Operations and Training, April, 1985, p. 1-10.

³¹U.S. Army Forces Command. SUBJECT: Updated Authorization Document - MTOE 07085HFC01 FC 1085, 29 October, 1986, p. 1-23.

³²75th Ranger Regiment. SUBJECT: 75th Ranger Regiment Statement of Operational Capabilities, 17 August, 1988.

³³With the exception of the Marine Corps' Marine Expeditionary Unit-Special Operations Capable (MEU-SOC). These remain organic to the three MEFs.

³⁴MTOE #07085HFC01 FC 1085, section III.

³⁵FC 7-85, p. 1-8.

³⁶75th Ranger Regiment. 75th Ranger Regiment Readiness Standing Operating Procedures (RSOP) 2 March, 1987, p. A-4-A-1 to A-4-D-1.

³⁷FC 7-85, pp. 1-13 to 1-14.

³⁸Ibid., p. K-1.

³⁹75th Ranger Regiment. SUBJECT: Ranger Training Schedule, July, 1986 - July, 1988, 11 July, 1986.

⁴⁰FC 7-85, p. 1-13 to 1-16.

⁴¹1st Special Operations Command. Regulation 350-1 Active Component Training, 15 December, 1986, pp. 8-1 to 8-9.

⁴²TRADOC Pam 525-34, p. 15.

⁴³Ibid., p. 13.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵FC 7-85, pp. 6-1 to 6-21.

⁴⁶TRADOC Pam 525-34, p. 15.

⁴⁷Department of the Army. Field Manual 7-93, Long-Range Surveillance Unit Operations, June, 1987.

⁴⁸FC 7-85, p. 1-8.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 6-1.

⁵⁰Joint Chiefs of Staff Publication #1. Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, June, 1987, p. 339.

⁵¹FC 7-85, pp. 8-1 to 8-2.

⁵²Darby, p. 182.

⁵³Glenn M. Harned. "Army Special Operations Forces and Airland Battle" (Master's thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1985) p. 83.

⁵⁴75th Ranger Regiment, letter. SUBJECT:
Statement of Operational Capabilities 17 August, 1988, p. 1.

⁵⁵TRADOC Pam 525-34, p.13.

⁵⁶Harned, p. 103.

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Captain (P) Stanley B. Clemons, student, USACGSC 88-89 with author, 12 Nov 88. (Former Cdr, A Co, 1st Ranger Battalion, former Operations Officer, 1st SOCOM)

Captain (P) Eric B. Hutchings, Operations Officer, TSB, USAIS with author 8, 12, 20 Nov 88. (Former Cdr, A Co, 3rd Ranger Battalion)